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MESSAGE

OF

GOVERNOR H. R. GAMBLE,

TO THE

Missouri State Convention,

ASSEMBLED AT

JEFFERSON CITY, JUNE 15, 1863.

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MESSAGE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:

Under the power conferred upon me by your body, I have called you together again to consult and act upon matters of the highest interest to the State.

The subject named in the call as that which, in my judgment, chiefly demands your attention, is that of the emancipation of slaves.

In my message to the General Assembly, I expressed to that body my general views upon the subject in this language: "Having always lived in States where slavery existed, I have had no such prejudice against the institution as is felt and expressed by many. But I have long entertained the opinion that the material interests of Missouri would be promoted, and her resources would be more rapidly developed by the substitution of free labor for slave labor. Entertaining this opinion, I looked to the rapid increase of free population and its excess over the slaves, as sure, in time and by ordinary laws that govern commercial interests to effect a change in our labor system. Taking no part in public affairs, I have been content to let the whole subject take its natural course, without mingling in the discussion which has arisen."

"The necessity for action at this time grows out of the present condition of the country. A great rebellion against our government exists, and its primary object is to inaugurate a government in which slavery shall be fostered as the controlling interest." "If the leaders of this rebellion do really desire to have our State within their pretended Confederacy, there can be no more effectual mode of extinguishing that desire than by showing

our purpose to clear the State ultimately of the institution which forms the bond of cement among the rebellious States."

Such being my views, and being bound by the Constitution "to recommend to the consideration of the General Assembly such measures as I should deem necessary and expedient," I suggested to that body a scheme of gradual emancipation. The General Assembly was prohibited by the Constitution from passing any law for the emancipation of slaves without the consent of their owners, or, without paying them, before such emancipation, a full equivalent for the slaves so emancipated. The prostrated condition of the finances of the State rendered it impossible for the State to pay the equivalent required by the Constitution. The certainty of obtaining money from the United States for that purpose was not sufficiently clear to form the basis of legislative action. The plan I recommended would have reduced the compensation required to an insignificant amount, an amount which in fact might have been provided by the State.

The General Assembly failed to act upon the subject

The importance of the subject in its relation to all the interests of the State demanded, in my judgment, very speedy action, by a body capable of finally disposing of it by the adoption of some wise and just scheme of emancipation. The Senate passed a joint resolution requesting me to call the Convention together, and also a bill for the election of delegates to a new Convention, provided your body should not before the first day of July next adopt a scheme of emancipation. Although neither of these measures was acted upon in the House of Representatives, yet the friends of emancipation in the House exhibited the greatest earnestness in endeavoring to have the bill which came from the Senate acted upon by the House, and were only foiled by the application of stringent parliamentary rules. This action in the Assembly gave strength to my own conviction that you should be called together rather than wait until the Assembly should again convene in November next, and then initiate measures of emancipation which might require some time before they could have effect.

It is under these circumstances that you have been called to assemble, and the subject of the emancipation of slaves is commended to your attentention as a subject of the highest interest to the State, and involving questions the most delicate and difficult that you can be required to solve.

I will not undertake the labor of developing any scheme and recommending it to you for adoption. The whole subject of emancipation is one

upon which the mind of men will differ as they are affected by prejudice, or inflamed by passion, or controlled by reason, and among those who favor emancipation under the guidance of reason alone there is such a variety of opinions about schemes and the details of schemes that there is no probability of any scheme devised by a single mind meeting with the ready approval of other minds in all its details. I will not therefore undertake the task of recommending any given scheme.

This, however, I may be allowed to say, that if a body of intelligent and patriotic men will approach the subject with a deep conviction that it is of the highest importance to the State that the subject should be disposed of, they will be able to dispose of it by agreeing upon some measure, although it may not in all its details be the exact expression of the will of any individual who sustains it.

I will venture to say, farther, that in this, as in all other cases, in which a State, for its own benefit, deprives any of its citizens of property, political morals require that the citizen shall be deprived of his rights no farther than is necessary to make the public benefit certain and secure. While, then, emancipation is necessary for the public good, the period at which it shall be made effectual and complete admits of great diversity of opinion. This question of time is one on which those who agree in respect to the main point can, by mutual concession, harmonize their views.

In my communication made to you at your session in June last, I submitted to you a brief statement of what I had done up to that time to put the State in a condition of defence, so that she might be protected against enemies, external and internal. The latter class consisted of bands of robbers and assassins, who, scattered over the country in smaller or greater numbers, made the existing state of war a cover for their schemes of plunder and murder. It became manifest that the regularly organized forces in the service of the United States were not as well adapted to the work of ridding the country from these bodies of outlaws, as would be a force of militia organized throughout the State, ready at all points to detect and destroy such an an active and vigilant enemy. The fact, too, that the population of the State, loyal and disloyal, were so mingled together as to render it impossible to distinguish between the friends and the enemies of the Government (where there had been no public manifestation of the feeling of disloyalty) and that such commingling of the classes facilitated the operations of these hostile bands and exposed the loyal men

to their outrages, rendered it necessary to distinguish the classes from each other. To accomplish both these objects, it was determined, in consultation with Brigadier (now Major) General Schofield, then commanding the District of Missouri, to organize the entire loyal militia of the State. Accordingly, an order was issued requiring the organization of the militia of the State, "for the purpose of destroying the bands of guerrillas," and committing the work of organization to General Schofield, who was a Brigadier of State Militia, as well as a Brigadier of United States Volunteers. Under his direction, the organization proceeded with great rapidity, and soon a large force was prepared to take part in the defence of the State and in protecting its loyal citizens. The process of organization had the immediate effect, too, of drawing the lines between loyal and disloyal citizens, and of giving confidence to loyal men as they became organized and armed and acquainted with their strength. This measure has been of incalculable benefit to the State, in preserving its loyal inhabitants from the depredations of marauding bands, in preventing the formation of such bands, and in pursuing and breaking them up when formed. And in battle with an organized enemy, as at Springfield and other places, the Enrolled Militia have shown that western troops, although they may be raw, have a daring enterprise, a reckless courage, which, with other people, is the result of long training and discipline.

Yet there are persons who speak against the Enrolled Militia, and make accusations against them of disloyalty. It may be true that the anxiety of officers, when forming regiments, to swell the number and apparent strength of their commands, may have caused them to admit into their ranks some disloyal men. Such conduct was in direct violation of the orders issued by General Schofield, and of orders issued from the headquarters of the State. When the roll of companies were deposited in the office of the Adjutant General, there was no means of ascertaining the loyalty or disloyalty of the men; all had been sworn alike, and if the officer had really obeyed orders, all were loyal, and therefore the organizations were recognized. That any considerable proportion of the Enrolled Militia are disloyal is not to be believed, when we see the alacrity with which they take the field, endure hardships and engage in battle. That some of them have been disorderly and lawless, committing gross outrages, may be admitted, but this will be the case with all troops in the field, unless they are restrained by their officers, and many officers of the militia have not acquired the habit of command.

Ever since the enterprise of opening the navigation of the Mississippi has been in progress, there has been a constant drain of United States forces from this State, and at the time of ordering the enrollment of the militia, the United States force within the State was so much reduced that its weakness was a strong reason for making the enrollment, so that the militia might be used for defence. The demand for troops to be sent South has ever since continued, and those who knew the object and felt that the opening of the navigation of our river was of the greatest importance to us, have felt willing to see all troops go who could be spared.

On the 18th of December last, I received from the President a dispatch in this language: "It is represented to me that the Enrolled Militia alone would now maintain law and order in all the counties of your State, north of the Missouri river; if so, all other forces there might be removed south of the river or out of the State. Please post yourself and give me your opinion upon this subject." To this dispatch I replied, that if the Government would pay and maintain the force, I would undertake the work, and would call out no more men than necessary,—that the removal of other troops would promote rather than hinder success.

After waiting for some time I explained my plan to Major General Curtis, commanding the Department, who objected that it would be too expensive. Knowing that the whole district of country referred to by the President had in it but one regiment of cavalry and a part of a regiment of infantry, and that Union men entertained strong apprehensions for their safety, I determined to carry out my plan without further delay. On the 3d of February last I instructed the Brigadier General Commanding the north-eastern portion of the State, to detail twenty-four companies, of *approved loyalty and efficiency*, with the requisite number of officers, and form them into two regiments; the force to be used "to repress any attempts at insurrection and to prevent any combinations against the Government, and to maintain the laws of the State." Similar instructions have been given to the other Brigadiers, and now there are nine such regiments formed and being formed in different parts of the State. In the meantime, the strength of the United States volunteer force in the State is being rapidly reduced by the demand for reinforcements to be sent to before the army Vicksburg, and we are approaching the condition in which we are to defend ourselves against enemies without, as well as within the State. I am confident, however, that the State Militia, organized

under the arrangement which I made with the President in November, 1861, and the regiments of Enrolled Militia, formed by the details just mentioned, will be able, with occasional help from the mass of the Enrolled Militia, to defend us against any enemy who is likely to approach our borders.

The promptitude with which the militia take the field was exhibited a short time since, when a Confederate force, coming from Arkansas, made a raid into the southeastern portion of the State, producing considerable agitation. Major General Curtis applied to me to call nine regiments into service. Orders were immediately dispatched to the Brigadiers from whose commands the men were wanted, and in a few days the whole force was on the march.

Although orders have been obtained from Washington for clothing, equipping and subsisting the militia in active service, our self-defence imposes a great expense in paying the men. But there can be no doubt that the United States will reimburse the State for all her outlay. In fact, the provision already made for clothing and subsisting the men, is an acknowledgement that they are rendering service for which the United States ought to pay.

In order that the whole military force may be most efficient, it has been judged best to place the militia in active service under the command of Major General Schofield, the Commanding General of the department, who is an educated and talented officer, interested in Missouri, and anxious for her peace and prosperity, and having no other ambition than to serve his country.

And now, Gentlemen of the Convention, you can see from this statement, taken in connexion with the communication made to you, at your session in last June, what has been done to place the State in an attitude of defence against all the enemies which the rebellion has brought against her. She has met every call for troops which the Government of the United States has made upon her. She has raised ten thousand men for her own defence to serve during the war. She has organized her entire loyal militia, and has called them into the field at such times and in such numbers as the protection of her people has demanded. She is now putting nine regiments into more permanent service, with every expense, except pay, borne by the United States, and all the militia in service are under the command of the Major General of the Department.

So far as any apprehension may be felt of any formidable invasion from the South, I regard it as groundless. The armies of the Union have carried the war far south of us, and we are in daily expectation that Vicksburg, the great stronghold of western rebellion, will yield to our arms, and that the navigation of the Mississippi will be opened to us. When this is accomplished, when our flag shall be bourne all along the Mississippi, there can be no war of magnitude on the western side of the river; there can be no reflux of the tide of war over our State, and the great labor which we have undertaken for Missouri, of holding her upright and safe as a member of the Union, will be completed, and you will feel and I will feel that the two years of care and anxiety which we have passed in her service will have their reward in the consciousness that our labors have not been in vain. And if at your present session some judicious scheme of emancipation shall be adopted, that will rapidly bring within her borders the crowds of the energetic and enterprising who seek western homes, you will soon see her desolated homes rebuilt, her war stricken fields again teeming with the rich products of her fertile soil, her mines pouring forth their wealth, her mechanic arts again flourishing, her institutions of learning filled with her blooming children, her credit as a State restored, and prosperity and happiness will reign throughout her borders.

The security of the State from any farther attempts to bind her to the Confederacy of the revolted States, will be an appropriate occasion for us to lay down the power which has been conferred upon us, and which we have wielded for the benefit of the State and of the Union. A measure of emancipation is to be regarded as a measure contributing to that security.

There is one other measure for which there appears to exist a great necessity,

In such a contest as has occurred within this State, feelings of revenge have arisen and have embittered the contest, and this feeling has often had expression in lawless acts of those who were in military service. The murderous warfare of the guerrilla and the bushwhacker, has provoked to retaliation upon those who were supposed to countenance their atrocities; and the exercise of this retaliatory vengeance has been left to the judgment or mere caprice of squads of soldiers. While the summary execution of men found in arms in these bands of miscreants is justified by the laws of war, it becomes altogether a different question whether a man shall be shot down in his field and his house be burned, upon the suspicion of a squad of sol-

diers that he is a secessionist or a rebel, or that he favors the guerrillas. It is too easy to cover up a desire for vengeance or a love of plunder, or a general thirst for blood by this off-hand denunciation and execution. Beside, this license has the effect of utterly demoralizing the troops who indulge it.

I submit to you, therefore, the propriety of providing for the establishment of some tribunal, civil or military, for the trial of persons belonging to such armed bands of guerrillas or bushwhackers, or furnishing them with information or assistance, so that the trial shall be prompt and the punishment adequate. This recommendation is founded upon the idea that these persons are not to be treated as persons engaged in war, but mere enemies of the human race, and it has the greater force, if we regard the probability that such bands will exist here even after the authority of the government has been completely established over the revolted States. They are not collections of men against whom proceedings are to be had by a sheriff with his posse, nor upon a warrant from a Justice of the Peace, nor upon an indictment found in the particular county in which a murder or a robbery has been perpetrated. They would laugh at such proceedings. They must be acted upon by a tribunal that proceeds differently from our civil courts. Suppose as an illustration of the idea, that the leader calls himself a Confederate officer ; we don't propose to deal with him as a Confederate officer, but as a person who is leading a band of robbers and murderers against the peaceable people of Missouri. I think the establishment of such tribunals would be the foundation of a proper restraint upon soldiers, by taking away all excuse for punishment by them, except in the single case of punishing men actually taken in arms, and it would have a better effect in restraining those who are tempted to join such bands when they discover certain but regular punishment before them.

Gentlemen of the Convention, as this is probably the last time you will assemble, it may not be inappropriate to refer to the different steps which have been taken in the process of upholding the authority of the Federal Government in Missouri.

At your first session, held in St. Louis, the utterances in your body that favored disunion were greeted with applause in the crowded lobby, and within two squares of the building in which your session was held, was the headquarters of the minute men, a treasonable organization, boldly in the face of day flaunting a flag which was the emblem of their disloyalty. You resolved against secession and separated.

Treason made rapid progress, its emissaries being active through the State. War against the Federal Government was inagurated, and the State authorities became committed to it. The zeal and energy of an assailing party, turning every occurence to their own account, and misrepresenting every act of the Government, swelled the ranks of the disaffected until, with impunity, the most opprobrious epithets were freely bestowed upon those who remained faithful to their allegiance.

In July, 1861, you again assembled, and meeting the crisis with firmness you deposed the State Government then in being, and inaugurated the Provisional Government on the last day of that month. You revived a militia law that had been originally designed for holliday parades. Believing that many had been led into treason by the persistant misrepresentation of the purposes of the Union party, I issued a proclamation on the 4th of August, designed to correct the wrong impressions which had been made, and, with consent of the President, offered an amnesty to those who would return to their allegiance.

On the 10th of that month the disastrous battle of Wilson's Creek was fought, and General Lyon fell. I had done my utmost, by application in writing, and in person to have him reinforced; consternation spread everywhere among the Union men. The secessionists were bouyant and confident. Many of your members became fugitives from your homes. Here, in the capital of the State, men of firmness and sense were uneasy because of the armed guard of the Penitentiary, which was entirely under the control of the secessionists. This latter class, here, in the confident expectation of success, were sure of speedily driving away the Provisional Government. The call for troops made on the 24th of August, and the efforts made to arm and equip them, have been stated to you in formere ommunications. Complaints that came to the Executive were all complaints of outrages perpetrated on Union men. The offices of the State were nearly all in the hands of enemies of the Government. The prospects of success was still on their side. An election had been provided for to take place in November to fill the executive offices which you vacated in July. It became apparent that if such election was attempted the voice of the Union men would be drowned, and the State would come under the sway of the secessionists. You were called to meet in October.

At your meeting in October you made provision for vacating the offices held by disloyal men, by requiring an oath of allegiance from office holders.

You provided a more efficient military law. You postponed the election of executive officers until the general election in August, 1862, and you offered an amnesty to rebels on conditions.

As time advanced and the Union men became better organized, and the Military strength greater, and as the Confederate forces were driven out of the State, the hopes of the secessionists became diminished, and when the enrollment of the loyal militia was made, then came in the complaints of wrongs sustained by the enemies of the Government. The power had changed hands, and those who had been free in denouncing the Government had come to regard it as quite endurable. Still there was cherished in many breasts a strong antipathy to its rule. Circumstances seemed to require that you should again assemble in June, 1862, and at your session at that time you determined to guard against the possibility of having a disdisloyal State Government. You provided that all who exercised the elective franchise should take an oath for their future loyalty, and that no person should be elected to office until he had taken oath that he had not been in arms nor aided those in arms against the Government. This was a precaution deemed necessary to prevent the power of the State, in elective offices, from falling into the hands of those who were enemies of the Government. You changed the time of general elections from August to November, and you postponed the election of executive officers until the regular election for such officers in 1864.

From this point of your action the spirit of the rebellion in the State may be said to be broken. That there are those who still cherish animosity against the Federal and State Government I am sure, and that there are those who cordially hate Union men I have occasion to know; that this spirit will exhibit itself in occasional outrages and in the collection of bands of outlaws, I do not doubt. But I think there will be no organized force of rebels, of any magnitude, again assembled in the State.

Thus I am led to the conclusion that by patient, persevering action, the State of Missouri has been preserved from falling into the crime of rebelling against the Federal Government and that she is now prepared to enter upon a new career of prosperity.

And now, Gentlemen of the Convention, I regard this as a suitable time to do what I have long contemplated.

When, on the 31st of July, 1861, you chose me to exercise the executive functions of the State, you will remember that I undertook the task

with the greatest reluctance, and only after the most earnest persuasion. I will not repeat the language in which I expressed to you my unwillingness to hold the office. It is sufficient for me to say that a sense of my responsibility to God and my country alone had influence with me. The office has never, at any subsequent period, been more desirable to me than it was the day I assumed the position, and I have waited for the time to come when I could conscientiously say that I had performed all you asked me to undertake. When I was chosen to the office, the only question which engaged our attention was, whether the status of Missouri as a State in the Union could be preserved, whether our rights as citizens of the United States could be protected against those who sought to bind us to the Confederacy of the revolted States. I regard such questions as settled.

The storm of regular war has passed far to the South. Adequate means to repress the outlaws who remain have been provided. Missouri is in no danger of being involved in the fortune and fate of the States in rebellion. Union men regard all such danger as past. They are now engaged in bitter disputes among themselves upon questions of internal policy. They evidently consider the war for the union as over in Missouri, and that what of trouble remains does not require them to be at peace among themselves.

I was not chosen to office to take part in questions of mere internal policy, except so far as they might be connected with the relations of Missouri to the Union.

I feel, then, that the service you required of me has been rendered, and that there is no farther demand upon me to continue the sacrifice of my own tastes and interests.

I announce to you, therefore, that I resign the office of Governor, to take effect upon the last day of your present session. I presume your adjournment will be *sine die*, and I desire my official career to terminate with yours. Moreover, the gentleman who succeeds me, and who knows nothing of my present act, will require a few days to become acquainted with the condition of the office.

I propose, gentlemen, to take my seat in your body (of which I am still a member) in order that I may render any assistance in my power in maturing and adopting such measures as you may attempt for the good of the State.

And now, gentlemen, I tender you my acknowledgments for the con-

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